

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Amend claims 1 and 21; and

Add claims 26 and 27.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for manufacturing an animal chew toy, comprising the steps of:

providing first and second layers ~~at least one sheet~~ of rubber material formed in a general shape and size of the animal chew toy;

placing a floss material comprising at least one mesh fabric sheet of synthetic fibers formed in a general shape and size of the animal chew toy ~~adjacent to~~ between the first and second layers ~~the at least one sheet~~ of rubber material; and

molding the sheets of rubber and floss material into the animal chew toy;

wherein the molding step includes the steps of compressing the sheets of rubber and floss material between opposing mold members under pressure and heat.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the rubber material comprises a tire rubber material.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the tire rubber material comprises natural or synthetic rubber mixed with carbon black.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the synthetic fibers of the mesh fabric comprise nylon or polyester fibers.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, including the step of attaching a rope to the animal chew toy.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, including the step of retaining an animal treat in a cavity of the animal chew toy.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, including the step of associating a buoyant insert with the animal chew toy.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the associating step comprises the step of inserting the buoyant insert into a cavity of the animal chew toy.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the buoyant insert comprises a closed cell foam.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, including the step of adding a scent material to the first and second layers of rubber.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the animal chew toy is of a tire configuration and having a diameter of between six inches and ten inches, and wherein the tire animal chew toy does not include imbedded metal therein.

14. (Original) A method for manufacturing an animal chew toy, comprising the steps of:

providing first and second layers of a tire rubber material cut into a general shape or size of the animal chew toy;

placing a floss material comprising a synthetic fiber mesh cut into the general shape or size of the animal chew toy between the first and second layers of rubber material; and

compressing the first and second layers of rubber and floss material under pressure and heat to mold the first and second layers of rubber and floss material into the animal chew toy.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the tire rubber material comprises natural or synthetic rubber mixed with carbon black.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the synthetic fibers of the mesh fabric comprise nylon or polyester fibers.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14, including the step of attaching a rope to the animal chew toy.

18. (Original) The method of claim 14, including the step of retaining an animal treat in a cavity of the animal chew toy.

19. (Original) The method of claim 14, including the step of associating a buoyant insert within a cavity of the animal chew toy.

20. (Original) The method of claim 14, including the step of adding a scent to the layers of rubber.

21. (Currently amended) A method for manufacturing an animal chew toy, comprising the steps of:

providing first and second layers ~~at least one sheet~~ of a tire rubber material comprised of natural or synthetic rubber mixed with carbon black and cut into a

general shape or size of the animal chew toy;

placing a sheet of floss material comprising a nylon or polyester fiber mesh cut into the general shape or size of the animal chew toy between the first and second layers ~~adjacent to the at least one sheet~~ of rubber material; and

compressing the sheets of rubber and floss material under pressure and heat to mold the rubber and floss material into the animal chew toy.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, including the step of attaching a rope to the animal chew toy.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, including the step of retaining an animal treat in a cavity of the animal chew toy.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, including the step of associating a buoyant foam insert within a cavity of the animal chew toy.

25. (Original) The method of claim 21, including the step of adding a scent material to the layers of rubber.

26. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the tire configuration includes an outer periphery having a tread design formed over at least a portion thereof, and spaced apart sidewalls extending inwardly from the outer periphery to define generally aligned central apertures, the periphery in the sidewalls having a generally U-shaped cross-section.

27. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the animal chew toy is compressed into a tire configuration having an outer periphery including a tread design formed over at least a portion thereof, and spaced apart sidewalls extending inwardly from the outer periphery to define generally aligned central apertures, the

periphery and the sidewalls having a generally U-shaped cross-section, the animal chew toy being devoid of metal.